Dear Dissemin, CAPSH and Wikimedia Italy

Your proposal to contact authors of scholarly works cited in Wikipedia and ask them to deposit an Open Access version is a great initiative.

You may be aware that the UK has many strict Open Access policies which mandate Open Access publication or self-archiving in institutional repositories. The broadest policy, which applies to all UK researchers, is the HEFCE Open Access policy. As a result of these policies, most UK institutions have well developed processes for handling Open Access enquiries.

One of the biggest challenges we face is convincing researchers that Open Access is more than just a policy compliance activity, which is why I’m interested in your initiative to contact academics from outside the standard university communication channels. A bit of perspective is a great thing and makes researchers realise that there are benefits to Open Access beyond simply compliance with funder policies.

Recently, we were forwarded some correspondence you had sent to a Cambridge researcher where you invited them to upload their work into Zenodo. One of their comments concerned whether they should deposit their work in a third party repository, or Cambridge’s own repository. This is what I’d like to discuss with you. Most researchers will be unfamiliar with Zenodo, despite its excellent credentials. Researchers, especially in the UK, will be aware of their own institutional repositories, and somewhat familiar with arXiv and PMC. That’s probably the extent of their knowledge regarding repositories. From an institutional perspective, it is also important that we collect research outputs into our own repository.

Therefore, we wonder whether it would be possible to adjust the emails you send to researchers (any email address within the cam.ac.uk domain) to instead invite them to deposit their work in an institutional repository instead?

We are happy to work with you on the wording of this amended text, and we can provide helpdesk support to any responses you get back. This would hopefully reduce confusion amongst academics (What is Zenodo? Is it legit?) and deflect questions to a local contact who should be able to provide personalised support. Indeed, we believe it should be possible to collate a list of institutions, relevant domains, and their repository details and then feed this information into whatever script you are using to produce more personalised emails to authors.

Please let us know your thoughts. As was mentioned before this is a great initiative you’ve started and I’m keen to see where it goes.

Signed,

UKCoRR

Arthur Smith, Office of Scholarly Communication, University of Cambridge